



**ELEANOR CHAFIN STOCKMAN**  
***AN IOWA CHAMPION FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE***

August 26<sup>th</sup> of 2020 marked the centennial of the adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment officially giving women the right to vote. The 2020 centennial slogan was *Hard Won, Not Done*.

Iowa women were passionately involved in the fight for equality since the mid-1850s. The Iowa Woman Suffrage Association was organized in 1870 in Mount Pleasant. By 1874 it was also known as the Iowa Equal Suffrage Association. In the early 1900s, many organizations such as the Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs were debating and advocacy for equal suffrage. In 1915, former Iowan Carrie Chapman Catt served a second term as president of the National Woman suffrage Association. Chapman Catt fiercely led the organization to implement her "winning plan" in which she devised a particular strategy for each state based on their political climate.

**Eleanor Chafin Stockman** (1856 -1924) moved to Mason City, Iowa in 1888. During her 30 years as a Cerro Gordo County resident, she served on both the school and library boards and raised funds for the American Red Cross and the YWCA. She was active in promoting temperance and suffrage and several other social causes. Most significantly, Eleanor Stockman was one of Iowa's leaders in the woman's suffrage movement. She regularly hosted the Mason City Women's Club meetings in her home and rallied it into a suffrage crusade.

In 1900 the Iowa Women's Suffrage Association was looking for ways to increase statewide support. While city and town folk could be more easily canvassed, the bulk of Iowa's population was spread out on farms. Stockman suggested one way to expand support and raise funds for the National American Women Suffrage Association would

be to ask Iowa farmers to donate their pigs and corn. Stockman took charge of this effort and personally contacted many farmers for donations. Rather than sending livestock to a national suffrage bazaar in NYC, it was requested by the NAWSA that the pigs and corn be sold and the money sent instead. As the word spread throughout Iowa, Stockman was known as the “stock-woman” and she was able to send ninety-five hogs and ten train car loads of corn to market in Chicago. One of the train cars was decorated with a suffrage-yellow banner touting “This Little Piggy Went to Market”. Others pledged money and added to Iowa’s total contribution of \$460, the second highest amount raised in the nation.

In 1901 Eleanor Stockman was the secretary of Iowa’s suffrage organization. In March of 1903 Stockman presented a paper entitled *Suffrage, a Human Right, Not a Privilege* at the Thirty-fifth Annual Convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association held in New Orleans, Louisiana. In her speech she said, “A mature, sane, competent person who is an integral part of human society and a citizen of a democracy should have the right of suffrage.”

The Suffrage Movement was often tied to the Temperance Movement. Eleanor Stockman’s brother, Eugene Chapin, ran for the US presidency representing the Prohibition Party in 1908 and 1912. Eleanor was also in this camp. Iowa passed a law in favor of prohibition in 1916, three years before the US congress passed the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment outlawing alcohol in 1919.

In 1920 after the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment, Eleanor was chair of the Iowa 4<sup>th</sup> district’s committee to encourage women to vote and attended the national convention of the Democratic Party and the last meeting of the National Women’s Suffrage Association in San Francisco.

Eleanor Stockman is one of 24 Iowans honored for their contribution toward women’s suffrage. Her name is engraved on a plaque at the headquarters of the National League of Women Voters in Washington, DC.

**Being involved with progressive circles, it follows suit that Eleanor Stockman would be instrumental in commissioning architect Frank Lloyd Wright while he was in Mason City to design an affordable home for her family. The 1908 home that Wright designed was revolutionary in its floor plan and was the first of its kind in Iowa, establishing the Prairie School Style in Mason City and the Midwest.**